

EXTERNAL SUPPORT IN CIVIL WARS AND ITS EFFECTS ON REFUGEE FLOW

by
Josiah Samuel Mezera

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
the requirements the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2019

Approved by

Advisor: Professor Benjamin T. Jones

Reader: Professor Timothy Nordstrom

Reader: Professor Susan Allen

©2019
Josiah Samuel Mezera
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful for the support, advice, guidance, and patience of my thesis advisor, Dr. Benjamin T. Jones. His help throughout the research, writing, and analysis processes of this thesis cannot be understated.

I am also appreciative of Dr. Nordstrom and Dr. Allen for taking the time to review my thesis.

I am thankful to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at the University of Mississippi for providing me with this research opportunity, as well as their administrative and moral support throughout my years at the University.

Lastly, I am thankful for my friends and family who have supported and encouraged me as I underwent this academic journey. Thank you!

ABSTRACT

JOSIAH SAMUEL MEZERA: External Support in Civil Wars and its Effects on Refugee Flow

(Under the direction of Benjamin T. Jones)

The refugee crisis in Syria that began in 2011 raised several questions in terms of civil war interventions and their effects on refugee flow. Did a third party's decision to intervene in the Syrian Civil War have any impact on the flow of refugees from the region? This thesis attempts to answer this question. There are multiple forms that external support by a third party can assume: direct military support, indirect military support, and humanitarian aid. This thesis hypothesized that direct and indirect military support would correlate with an increased number of refugees, and that humanitarian aid would have little to no correlation. This thesis used data from Patrick M. Regan's article "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts" (2002) to construct each of those broad categories of external support by combining relevant variables into a single measure. These categories were then tested using R against refugee data pulled from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. While regression tests supported the second hypothesis by showing little to no correlation between humanitarian aid and refugee flow, direct and indirect military support also exhibited little to no relationship with refugee flow. Tests at the constituent variable-level, however, did reveal that external support in the form of troops or military equipment were correlated with increased numbers of refugees, opening the door for further research with respect to these types of interventions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	2
THEORY.....	3
WHY DO PEOPLE BECOME REFUGEES?.....	3
INDIRECT MILITARY SUPPORT.....	9
DIRECT MILITARY SUPPORT.....	14
HUMANITARIAN AID.....	18
HYPOTHESES.....	19
DEFINITIONS.....	20
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	22
RESULTS.....	25
HUMANITARIAN AID.....	25
INDIRECT MILITARY SUPPORT.....	27
DIRECT MILITARY SUPPORT.....	30
CONCLUSION.....	32
REFERENCES.....	35

Introduction

In 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded 1.3 million Syrian refugees throughout the world. The so-called Syrian Refugee Crisis was a direct result of the ongoing Syrian Civil War, which featured at least four different competing factions. This civil war brought about interventions by regional and international actors, each with their own policy incentives for supporting a particular faction. What impact did these interventions have on the level of refugee flow from Syria?

The objective of this research is to determine the impact of external support in civil wars on the level of refugee flow. Competing factions often receive a wide variety of external support, ranging from direct military support to humanitarian aid. While contemporary research has analyzed the relationship between intrastate conflict and refugee flow, there exists almost no research on the relationship between refugee flow and different types of external support. This thesis hopes to establish strong connections between different types of external support and the flow of refugees from a country undergoing a civil war. By understanding how different types of support for a faction in a civil war can impact the overall regional stability, states can better assess the costs and benefits of getting involved with that secessionist conflict. If one of the known impacts of a certain type of external support was an increased rate of refugee flow, countries may reconsider their strategies for intervention. Some states would find this information more useful than others, including those in conflict-hot regions like the Middle East, South America, and Africa. International actors like the United States, Russia, the EU, UN, and NGO groups could apply this information to their foreign policy strategies and seek a more effective means of intervening in a civil war.

In this thesis, I will elaborate on the theoretical definition of refugee flow, as well possible explanations for why some forms of external support are more likely to produce refugees than others. I hypothesize that indirect and direct forms of military support will correspond to a higher level of refugee flow, and that humanitarian aid will have no effect. First, I will review the literature on interventions in civil wars and theories related to refugee flow. I follow this with a theoretical argument describing the process by which external support can affect refugee flow in civil wars. Next, I will conduct multiple regression tests on broadly categorized forms of external support, as well as their constituent variables. Lastly, I discuss the results of my analysis and make suggestions in terms of policy applications and future research. In general, my results find little to no correlation between my broadly defined categories of indirect and direct military support and refugee flow, although humanitarian aid was correctly predicted to have little to no effect. At the constituent variable level, however, interventions in the form of troops or military equipment were shown to have a positive effect on the number of refugees.

Literature Review

The relationship between civil wars and civilian victimization is essential to the understanding of refugee flow. Idean Salehyan and Kristian Gleditsch observed that certain regions of the world experience conflict more than others, and that the movements of displaced peoples (namely refugees) is a major source of that conflict (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). This observation establishes the importance of understanding why these regions experience more refugee flows. Davenport, Moore, and Poe attempt to answer this question in their article (2003). What they found is that through measuring state threats to personal integrity, dissident threats to personal integrity, and joint state-

dissident threats they could predict which countries would experience higher levels of refugee migrants. In other words, countries where the state actively threatens its people often experience higher levels of exiting refugees. Claire Apodaca postulates this theory in her article (1998). While Davenport et al. measured state threats as an indicator of higher refugee flow, Apodaca looks specifically at human rights abuses. She finds that states with higher levels of human rights abuses tend to have higher levels of refugee flow. This is an important point for determining the overall theory behind why certain types of support could lead to higher levels of refugees. Support that increases the threat-making abilities of the state or rebels could lead to higher levels of refugees, whereas support that does not increase their threat-making abilities will have little to no impact. And while it may not be in relation to civil wars specifically, researcher Alexander Downes analyzes the logic behind civilian victimization in interstate wars (2006). According to Downes, longer conflicts, typically those with an attrition aspect, usually see higher levels of victimization. States adopt this strategy for a few reasons: to coerce their adversary to quit, to reduce their losses, and to eliminate the possibility of a future rebellion. Overall, these works illustrate the positive relationship between intrastate conflicts and civilian victimization.

Kalyvas asserts that there is a definitive logic to civilian victimization, specifically in civil wars (2006). Unlike studies on interventions, however, Kalyvas suggests that violence against civilians is the result of preexisting internal issues between different citizen groups. Wood, Kathman, and Gent argue that violence against noncombatants can vary in response to a direct military intervention by a third party (2012). Their study found that an external intervention results in a decreased amount of

civilian victimization on the side receiving the external support, whereas violence increases for the side in opposition. This is true whether the intervention is on the side of the rebels or government. Their study confirms Kalyvas' theory that civilian violence is an intentionally implemented strategy. What these viewpoints suggest is that regardless of the scale, style, or dimensions of a civil war, civilian victimization will always be an element of the competing forces' strategy. It is the implementation of this strategy that leads to refugee flow.

One researcher, Myron Weiner, examined the origin of refugees since the end of World War II (1996). He first identified four refugee-generating problems in intrastate conflicts: reckless violence against non-combatants, ethnic divisions, non-ethnic divisions, and repressive regimes. The common denominator in these problems was violent acts committed against civilians, reaffirming the conclusions reached by Apodaca (1998). If an intrastate conflict escalates into warfare, the levels of violence will increase and that violence will generate actions against non-combatants. Non-combatants then become refugees. E.F. Kunz describes refugee flow as a push-pull kinetic model (1973). In other words, individuals flee a country owing to a combination of push factors within their country of origin, and pull factors within the country they flee to. Additionally, Kunz asserts that refugees conform to one of two types of kinetic flight patterns which he calls *anticipatory* and *acute refugee movement*. *Anticipatory refugee movement* refers to flight in which an individual leaves their home country before deteriorating military and political events prevent their orderly departure. *Acute refugee movement* refers to flight in response to an immediate danger or military/political threat. Kunz further distinguishes these two patterns by their rates of flow. *Acute* flights tend to occur in large numbers,

whereas *anticipatory* flights are steady rates. This supports the arguments of Kalyvas (2006) and Wood, et al. (2012), in that civilian victimization is eventually employed in a civil war at varying degrees. As the degrees of violence change, so too do the refugee flight patterns of civilians. The variation in refugee flow is therefore a direct result of external actors' intervention strategies, according to Wood, Kathman, and Gent. For this reason, it is important to understand the logic of external support in a civil war.

How external support figures in to these relationships is clear. Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham analyzed the logic behind external support for insurgent groups (2011). What they found is that external governments are more likely to support an insurgent group when that group is moderately strong and more likely to accept that support, in the presence of transnational constituencies, international rivalries, and when the government receives foreign support. They look at support from a supply and demand perspective, wherein external governments must have a reason to supply their support to insurgent groups and those insurgent groups in turn must have a demand in order to accept that support. Rebel groups that are very strong or very weak are less likely to receive external support. Transnational linkages and interstate rivalries are key sources of support for rebel groups, especially in cases where the government forces receive support from an external actor. In fact, excluding interventions by world powers, Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham find that almost all external support for a rebel group comes from transnational constituencies and/or rival states. This fact is very important in order to understand how to analyze external support. While he might not have elaborated on refugees, researcher Patrick Regan also provides valuable insight on how interventions effect civil wars (2002). Essentially, his research confirms that interventions are a form of

policy implementation by third parties, and that they are deployed intentionally with specific expectations. The chief expectation of interventions by third parties tends to be that they will reduce conflict duration. What he found, however, is that interventions actually extend conflict durations. This conclusion can provide an empirical explanation for why interventions may lead to increased amounts of refugees if one considers the increased opportunities for violence provided by the extended duration. This relationship is theoretical, however, and Regan does not discuss issues relating to civilian victimization or refugees in his article.

Theory

Why do people become refugees?

It is important to break down the key factors that drive individuals to become refugees in order to understand how external support can influence that phenomenon. When it comes to the relationship between external support for a rebel movement and refugee flow, the underlying issue is violence. Violence, as previous literature has noted (Apodaca, Balcells & Kalyvas, Davenport et al., Salehyan & Gleditsch), is the leading indicator that a conflict will produce refugees. The more violent the conflict, the more refugees it will produce (Kalyvas, 2006). This violence can take multiple forms: conventional battlefield casualties, terrorism, genocide, ethnic conflict, state police brutality, rioting, and famine/resource denial.

In most intrastate conflicts, violence and refugee flow are both tied to the issue of ethnic conflict. Weiner remarks how both secessionist wars and attacks against minorities account for a large number of refugees (Weiner, 1996). Many of these conflicts begin when a minority within a country experiences persecution from the ethnic majority. The

response by these minorities is to either fight or flee. Fleeing minorities account for the early waves of refugees in intrastate conflicts. The subsequent fighting between the secessionist/rebel movement and the government leads to prolonged violence, and this violence induces even more waves of refugee flow. Weiner also remarks how non-ethnic civil wars account for a large flow of refugees (1996). There are two theoretical reasons these conflicts produce refugees: lack of central control, and/or active government persecution. When the state becomes incapable of protecting its citizens (especially minorities) against violence, those citizens often choose to flee. Citizens also choose to flee when they are being victimized. Balcells and Kalyvas found that different styles of civil wars lead to different levels of civilian victimization (2014). Specifically, they found that what they define as “irregular wars,” or wars fought in a guerilla fashion between conventional government forces and lightly armed rebels, are correlated with higher levels of civilian victimization. This confirmed their hypothesis that irregular civil wars are the “dirtiest” in that civilians are often targeted and their livelihoods severely impacted by the state. The state may choose to target civilians if it believes that they are supplying the rebels with resources, recruits, or intelligence. This relationship between irregular conflicts and civilian victimization also confirmed the general theories expressed by Kalyvas in his earlier work (2006). Using the case of the Greek Civil War as micro-level evidence, he found that when civilians are targeted, it is often by local actors and center-based political elites, and oftentimes their targets are intimates or peers. These same center-based elites try to draw lines along identities and preferences, and these lines only develop into further violence and targeting.

A key factor in these situations is the degree of control the state and rebel factions

have in a particular territory. Civilians are sometimes targeted because a combatant wants information, and Kalyvas finds that this type of targeting counterintuitively occurs less often in hotly contested regions. This could be illustrative of the state's paranoia of the spread of the rebel movement and the rebel movement's determination to maintain control over captured territory. These paranoia-based attacks lead to further incentives for civilians to flee the country. Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay also monitor the relationship between wars and civilian victimization (2004). They analyzed the incidence of mass killings since 1945 in a data set that included 147 different wars. What they found is that civilian mass killing is often employed as a calculated military strategy used by regimes to defeat guerilla forces in an asymmetric conflict. This fact supports the arguments of Kalyvas. Their logic is as follows: regimes facing a large insurgency threat from guerilla groups have few means of defeating that group head-on. Such attempts often prove fruitless and costly to the regime. Regimes can often identify the civilian support bases of that guerilla group, however, and by attacking said civilian support base they can indirectly harm the efforts of the guerilla group. The regime has little incentive to do this in a conflict where the opposing forces attack in conventional ways. This strategy is only helpful to the regime when it is against a much weaker guerilla group.

As discussed, there are several reasons why citizens choose to become refugees. Most cases of refugee flow manifest due to violence against civilians by either the state or rebel movement. Those two origins of violence are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rebel violence against civilians can occur simultaneously with state violence against civilians. The key motivations for both groups to commit that violence are not too dissimilar either. In a country with salient ethnic divisions, minorities choose to flee

when they are being targeted by the majority. The minorities that fight will usually target the majority group in response. People from the targeted majority in regions controlled by the minority then choose to flee. In non-ethnic intrastate conflicts, civilians flee when they are victimized. Both the state and the rebel movements have reasons for intentionally targeting civilians. The state may target civilians when the rebel movement uses guerilla tactics and blends in with the civilian population. Victimization here is a means of limiting rebel support bases. Rebels may also target civilians in order to raise the costs of war and push the state government negotiate a settlement. In all of these cases, civilians are experiencing the violence directly. External support can operate in each of these cases in such a way that violence is affected.

Indirect Military Support

External support is only relevant to the issue of refugee flow if it ties back in to one of those forms of violence. This is possible if one considers the enabling ability of support. Some forms of support enable the rebel movement to carry out forms of violence more than others. The findings of researchers like Kalyvas and Valentino, et al., suggest that instances of civilian targeting and victimization are most common in asymmetric conflicts. While they acknowledge instances of victimization in conventional wars, there is a much higher likelihood of violence against civilians in conflicts where the rebel movement is much smaller than the state military. External support can enable rebel movements to conduct attacks against the government without pushing the conflict into a more conventional-style war. Specifically, indirect support in the form of weapons, training, money, and intelligence enables the rebel movement to carry out attacks against

the government, thus becoming more threatening without embroiling the country in a full-scale, conventional war. Likewise, the more threatening the rebel movement is the more likely the state government is to respond, sometimes in the form of civilian victimization as Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay (2004) point out. Indirect military support can provide the necessary resources that a rebel movement needs in order to carry out more effective attacks against the government.

The Viet Cong, for example, relied more on demonstrations and small-scale bombings to achieve their political goals prior to their sponsorship by the North Vietnamese government (The Pentagon Papers, 1971). Violence escalated drastically after North Vietnam began supplying the Viet Cong weapons and resources in earnest. One scholar found that the number of clashes between the Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese government increased from 180 in January of 1960 to 545 in September that same year (Kelly, 1973). This indicates that the Viet Cong were more enabled to carry out attacks against the government when they enough support in the form of resources. The indirect nature of the support, however, meant that the Viet Cong could only pursue guerilla tactics as a means of fighting the state. They lacked the heavy weaponry necessary to fight the state on a conventional front. Their strategy involved blending in with local populations and generating support among rural civilians. Because of this strategy, state and US forces notoriously targeted and victimized civilian villages who they believed to be in league with the Viet Cong. Similarly, to dissuade cooperation with the state and US as well as increase the overall cost of war, the Viet Cong targeted civilian villages found supporting the government. The violence and political ramifications resulting from the decade-long conflict between the Viet Cong and South

Vietnamese government resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing to nearby regions in what was called the Indochina refugee crisis (Thompson, 2010). While there were multiple factors leading up to the refugee crisis at its apex, the success and violence of the Viet Cong were catalysts to the shifting trend of violence, genocide, and political instability in the region. That success and violence would have been less likely to occur had the Viet Cong not received indirect military support from the North Vietnamese government.

Exodus from Indochina, 1975-95

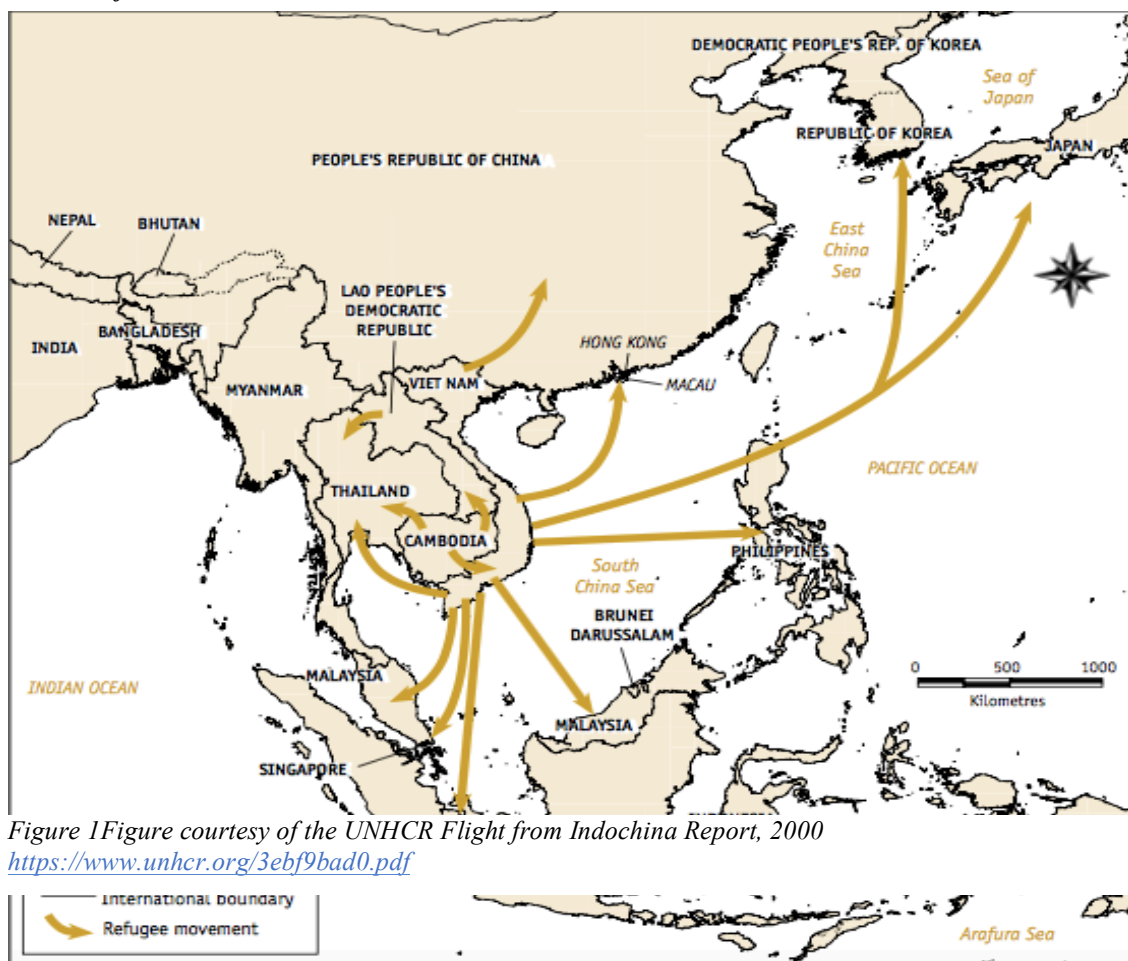


Figure 1 Figure courtesy of the UNHCR Flight from Indochina Report, 2000

<https://www.unhcr.org/3ebf9bad0.pdf>

civilians exists in the case of the Syrian Civil War. During the Arab Spring of 2011,

massive protests against the Ba'athist government of Syrian under Assad led to clashes between citizens and government security forces. These clashes gradually became more common, but largescale violence did not begin until defectors from the Syrian Army formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA) under the auspices of Turkey (Stack, 2011). Turkey's further provision of training, intelligence, weapons, and transportation allowed the FSA to grow and carry out largescale attacks on government-held cities and towns. Early on, before the conflict took on a more conventional nature, the Syrian government could not easily distinguish between cities and towns loyal to the state and those that defected to the FSA. Because of this, the government conducted several indiscriminate attacks on areas suspected of supporting the rebels. Several international organizations even accused the Assad regime of using chemical weapons which killed hundreds of civilians. By 2012, the US, UK, Kuwait, Sierra Leone, France, Germany, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia were all indirectly supporting the FSA in their war against the Syrian government.

Syrian Refugees in Neighboring Countries, 2018



Figure courtesy of the UNHCR Syrian Response Summary 2019-2020
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67370>

This pronounced increase in external support corresponds to an increased amount of refugee flow. This is no coincidence. The increased international attention and support for the rebel movements severely endangered the Assad regime's influence and legitimacy. In response, the Assad regime became increasingly more violent toward civilians in an effort to dissuade support for any of the rebel movements. By 2013, an estimated 1.5 million people had fled Syria (Taheri, 2013). Further interventions over the course of the next 3 years showed similar trends. The more external support given to the FSA and other rebel groups in Syria, the more violent the conflict has become. Over 6 million Syrians fled the country by 2018, due in large part to the unceasing and

widespread violence (UNHCR, 2018). This case and that of the Viet Cong are both compelling evidence of the phenomenon whereby external military support for a rebel movement leads to increased violence in the form of civilian victimization, and that violence by extension leads to increased refugee flow.

Direct Military Support

It is important to distinguish between indirect and direct military support, however. This can be done by comparing the rates of refugee flow for distinct periods of time. In the previously cited cases of Vietnam and Syria, for example, there are specific years where only indirect support is given to the rebel movement, and there are generally accepted years where that support becomes direct. It is possible to compare the rates of refugee flow for those separate periods. The problem with this, however, is that indirect support does not cease once direct support begins. Nevertheless, the nature of the conflict very clearly changes, shifting toward a more conventional style as opposing forces prioritize military targets over civilian ones.

The expectation is that the rate of refugee flow will be higher during periods of direct military support than in years without any support. There are several reasons for this expectation. Again, the root cause of refugee flow is violence. Indirect and direct military support for a rebel movement increases that movement's strategic capabilities, and they are then able to conduct larger and more costly attacks on the state, shifting the conflict toward a more conventional style of warfare. When the conflict becomes more conventional, rebel movements typically begin to consolidate territory and establish clear, direct control over the civilians of that territory. In both ethnic and non-ethnic related

conflicts this can lead to persecution against groups unaffiliated with the rebel movement. This persecution incentivizes civilians to flee, and it leads to refugee flow if those civilians are unable to reach areas within their own country where they are the ethnic majority. This trend continues as long as the rebel movement has the necessary resources to continue fighting a conventional war and consolidate their territory.

One can distinguish between indirect and direct support by comparing the nature of the conflict before and after direct involvement. In Syria, for example, the United States did not directly support the rebel movements there until 2014. In the years prior, the extent of US support was indirect in forms of training, funding, weapons, and intelligence. After 2014, however, the US began conducting airstrikes and bombardments of ISIL-held territories (Cooper & Schmitt, 2014). These airstrikes, while notorious for their indiscretion (Tran, 2015), allowed Kurdish and FSA rebel groups to consolidate their territory without the added threat of organized ISIS mobilizations against their territories. This conflict then quickly changed from a guerilla/asymmetric war to a more conventional war drawn along political, religious, and ethnic lines. Between 2014 and 2018 the number of Syrian refugees almost doubled, even after an unprecedented 3 million people had already fled the country in the years prior (UNHCR). Many of these refugees fled because of persecution by a group whose political, religious, or ethnic identity they did not affiliate with. This indicates that direct military support often changes the nature of the conflict from an asymmetric/guerrilla conflict to a more conventional style of warfare. When this happens, both the state and rebel movement draw battle lines and consolidate territory. Groups unaffiliated with whoever is in power in that territory are often persecuted and incentivized to flee.

Further evidence of the distinct impact of direct military support can be found in the case of Kosovo. Kosovo underwent a conflict in 1998 which saw a majority-Albanian rebel movement called the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fought against the Yugoslavian government (FRY). The early stages of the conflict followed a similar pattern to the cases of Syria and Vietnam. The KLA, while small at its beginning, garnered support from external actors like Albania (Bacevich & Cohen, 2001). Upon receiving this support, the KLA conducted more aggressive and violent attacks against Yugoslavian forces. The subsequent response by the FRY increased the levels of violence in the region, and ethnic targeting by the government resulted in hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians fleeing into nearby countries as refugees as territory became more consolidated between the two sides (UNHCR). Another shift in the dynamic of the conflict occurred when NATO forces got involved and directly supported the KLA rebels with airstrikes and the strategic insertion of peacekeeping forces. This shifted the trends of the region, whereby ethnic Serbs started to flee the region as refugees in fear of Albanian retaliation and persecution.

Areas of Control in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 1995



The relationship between refugee flow and direct military support is complex.

Figure 2 Figure courtesy of the UNHCR War and Humanitarian Action Report 2000
<https://www.unhcr.org/3ebf9bb50.pdf>

When an external actor becomes directly involved in an intrastate conflict, it often changes the nature of the conflict and the style of the warfare. If the conflict was asymmetric and the rebels used guerilla tactics to combat the state, then the rebels would have been less likely to consolidate territory. Thus, most refugees at this stage were likely victimized by the state or rebel forces as previously mentioned with indirect military support. Once another actor becomes directly involved in the conflict, however, the style of warfare often changes to become more conventional. At this stage, the rebel movement can begin consolidating territory without the fear of being overwhelmed by the state's

forces. If this conflict was ethnic in nature, or lines were drawn along religious, cultural, or political affiliations, then groups within that consolidated territory not affiliated with the rebel identity typically face increased levels of persecution. Thus, their incentives to flee as refugees increase.

Humanitarian Aid

Humanitarian aid, by contrast, should not have this effect. The expectation with humanitarian aid is that at the very least it has no impact the rate of refugee flow. It is unreasonable to assume that a humanitarian intervention will result in a negative refugee flow rate. That is, humanitarian aid delivered to a country undergoing a civil war of some sort is unlikely to bring refugees back into their country of origin. This is unlikely for several reasons. Wood and Sullivan found that aid can actually increase incentives for violence in some cases (2015). They argue that aid encourages looting and predation on the part of the rebel organization. This behavior naturally leads to violence against noncombatants, such as resource denial. Furthermore, Wood and Sullivan argue that aid presents a challenge to rebel authority. Rebel groups rely heavily on the support of local populations, and aid can decrease civilian dependence on that rebel group for resources, order, and protection. What is interesting to note from their study is that these negative effects of humanitarian aid mostly apply to the rebel organization. Additionally, these effects are much more likely if the external actor delivering the aid is closely tied to the state's government. The state government might increase its level of violence against civilians if it sufficiently believes the threat of rebel insurgency within the aid site is likely. State forces are more reluctant than rebel groups to violently exploit civilians near

aid sites due to attention from international actors tied to those sites, as well as the threat of losing said aid if the state does not comply with the donors' standards of conduct. Nevertheless, this violence should not be as pronounced as violence enabled due to military support. Dreher, Fuchs, and Langlotz did a systematic study on foreign aid and refugee inflows/outflows within both donor and recipient countries (2018). Their results measured over the period between 1973 and 2013 show no robust effect of total aid inflows to a country on total refugee outflows in the short term. They only found evidence of decreased refugee outflows in periods longer than 10 years, but they associated this decrease with the lagged effects of aid on economic and population growth. They also believe that any increase in refugee inflows to donor countries are primarily driven by perceptions and that those countries experience an improved image for a short time. Overall, they found that their results indicate that the short-term effects of limiting refugee flow are marginal at best.

Hypotheses

These cases present multiple hypotheses dealing with external support in three main forms: indirect military support, direct military support, and humanitarian aid.

Hypothesis 1: Indirect and direct military support will correlate with increased levels of refugee flow.

Hypothesis 2: Humanitarian aid will have little to no correlation with refugee flow.

These hypotheses should challenge external state justifications for intervention that claim they are seeking to limit the spread of refugees. Given that states have policy goals, and

that these goals can be achieved through interventions, states may choose to reevaluate their cost-benefit analysis for intervention if the added costs of refugee flow are considered. This is true for indirect military support, direct military support, and humanitarian aid.

Definitions

For the sake of this thesis, external support can exist in one of three ways: indirect military support, direct military support, and humanitarian aid. Indirect military support refers to any military support that does not involve direct military confrontations with the state. This could include intelligence, training, and the supply of weapons and equipment. Direct military support refers to any direct military confrontations with the state. This could manifest in the forms of strategic bombing, conventional military intervention (boots on the ground), and sabotage or raids directed at the state's military infrastructure. Humanitarian aid refers to any support intended to bring relief to victims of a disaster. For the purpose of this research, humanitarian aid would be any logistical or material assistance delivered to noncombatants of a country undergoing an internal conflict. The aid must be administered within the country undergoing the conflict. Categorically, the effects of direct and indirect military support are expected to have similar impacts on refugee flow while the effects of humanitarian aid should have a little to no impact. This should be expected due to the normative understanding of military support versus humanitarian aid in terms of enabling violence, with military support for combatants in both its direct and indirect forms being much more enabling than the provision of humanitarian aid for noncombatants.

Rebel movements refer to any insurgency or belligerency within a particular country. Insurgencies are conflicts between a rebel group and the state in which the rebel movement does not have belligerent status as defined by Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Belligerencies, by comparison, do have belligerent status. For this paper, the difference between the two terms is irrelevant. A rebel organization is pertinent to this research if it is in conflict with the state government and it is receiving external support. While wars between sovereign states also produce refugees, the political dynamic in question is quite different. States lend support to rebel organizations for similar reasons that they would to a sovereign state, but they assume a higher risk by supporting the less-established rebel movement. The cost-benefit analysis of intervention is therefore different with rebel movements, and warrants its own research. Since the risk for intervention is already higher for external actors, the added understanding of how their support affects refugee flow may impact their likelihood to intervene.

Refugee flow is the measurement of the phenomenon when people "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, [are] outside the country of [their] nationality and [are] unable or, owing to such fear, [are] unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country" (1951 Refugee Convention). What this definition does not include is internally displaced peoples. While it is likely that external support for a rebel movement can have a profound impact on the number of internally displaced peoples in a country, this research paper is only concerned with the number of people who flee the country entirely. This is both for the sake of interest in that particular phenomenon and for statistical clarity. Including internally displaced peoples in the

statistical analysis would add several complications, the first being that the measurement of humanitarian aid would be largely irrelevant. This paper is interested in the measurement of humanitarian aid within a country due to its expected effect of limited impact on the flow of refugees. Humanitarian aid centers within a country tend to attract internally displaced peoples, possibly even inflating those values by giving noncombatants a safe haven and further incentive to abandon their homes. This paper is only concerned with individuals who flee the country entirely due to that phenomenon's direct impact on regional activity.

Research Design

My purpose in this research is to understand the connection between external support for a rebel movement during a civil war and refugee flow. As there is already a vast array of data collected on civil wars and interventions, this simplifies the issue of data collection. Patrick M. Regan's data in his article "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts" (2002) provides the most thorough and relevant set of variables to test my hypotheses. Regan recorded data on civil conflicts between the years 1945 and 1999 along with any interventions associated with those conflicts. His parameters for defining a civil war were less restrictive than other sources, requiring only 200 fatalities to qualify as a civil war. This allowed him to include more conflicts whose combat fatalities may have been limited, but whose aggregate impact is unmistakably violent and disruptive. Regan recorded a total of 151 conflicts under those parameters, within which he counted 1,036 individual interventions. Some of these variables of intervention were recorded as dichotomous "yes" or "no" / "1" or "0" value designation,

indicating that variable of interest was present or not present under the specified conditions. Other variables record estimates of the total value of that variable in the specified conditions.

Regan's data did not include any information on refugees, however. This data was collected from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Statistics Database. The UNHCR Database reports data pertaining to country-year recordings of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced peoples, and stateless peoples. This data was merged with Regan's and recorded as the variable "refugee flow." This variable includes estimates on country-year values of refugees or individuals in refugee-like conditions as reported by the UNHCR.

Hypothesis 1 is directional and positive; I anticipate a change in the level of refugees in cases where direct and indirect military support is present. *Hypothesis 2* suggests that there will be no change in the flow of refugees when tested against humanitarian aid. My independent variable (IV) is external support, while refugee flow will serve as the dependent variable (DV). I will not be testing just one broadly defined variable called "external support." Instead, this larger IV will be tested in multiple categories: direct military support, indirect military support, and humanitarian aid.

I operationalize direct military support in two ways. First, I use a combined measure which includes three variables in Regan's data: "troops," "navy," and "airforce." These variable names refer to the form of military intervention. This combined measure is tested in a multiple regression model against the variable "refugee flow." Second, I disaggregate this measure by breaking it into its constituent variables and test them individually.

Indirect military support is operationalized in a similar way. I first use a combined measure which includes the variables “equip” and “intel.” “Equip” refers to any military equipment or aid supplied during the conflict, and “intel” refers to any form of intelligence or reconnaissance delivered to combatants. It too is first tested as a combined measure in a multiple regression model, and then broken into its constituent variables and tested individually.

Humanitarian aid will be designated by the variables “aid” (includes all non-military aid delivered to actors within a particular conflict), “grant” (any funds given freely without interest during the conflict), “loan” (funds loaned during the conflict), “credit,” and “relief” (relief of past financial obligations). Like the previous two categories, humanitarian aid will be tested as a combined measure, and then disaggregated and tested at the individual variable level.

For control variables (CV), I am including Regan’s measures of “sizeopp” (size of opposition forces), “coldwar” (indicates if a conflict was part of the Cold War), and “fatal” (estimate of the total fatalities in a conflict). These CV’s should account for any changes in the DV across IV tests. These variables will be tested against my DV, “refugee flow” (measurement of refugees or individuals forced into refugee-like situations)

Results

Humanitarian Aid

I ran three separate multiple regression models to test each category of variables for external support. The first category was humanitarian aid, which was comprised of the variables “aid,” “grant,” “loan,” “credit,” and “relief.” The summary statistics for this

regression test can be found under “Model 2” in *Table 1* below. Humanitarian aid had a coefficient estimate of 3.373e+04 and a standard error of 8.344e+04. Its p-value of 0.6860 and t-value of 0.404 indicate very little statistical significance with the DV, suggesting that the correlation between humanitarian aid as it is broadly defined and refugee flow is low. A correlation test between the two variables produces a value of 0.00676, well within the range denoting a weak relationship ($-0.2 < x < 0.2$). There is still a lack of statistical significance at the constituent variable level as well. “Aid” had a t-value of -0.655 and a p-value of 0.5128 to go along with a coefficient estimate of -2.416e+05 as shown in “Model 1.” This variable was the closest of set in exhibiting any statistical significance in relation to “refugee flow,” but even it still falls short of the acceptable range.

Table 1: Multiple Regression Models for Humanitarian Aid and Its Constituent Variables

Variable	Model 1				Model 2			
	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
(Intercept)	2.409e+05	1.464e+04	16.456	<2e-16 ***	2.411e+05	1.463e+04	16.478	<2e-16 ***
Humanitarian Aid	-	-	-	-	3.373e+04	8.344e+04	0.404	0.6860
Aid	-2.416e+05	3.691e+05	-0.655	0.5128	-	-	-	-
Grant	5.157e+04	9.337e+04	0.552	0.5807	-	-	-	-
Loan	5.909e+04	2.791e+05	0.212	0.8323	-	-	-	-
Credit	-1.872e+05	5.217e+05	-0.359	0.7197	-	-	-	-

There are several ways to interpret these results. The first, and most obvious, interpretation is that humanitarian aid as it is broadly defined in this test has little to no direct impact on refugee flow. Its positive coefficient estimate contradicts the hypothesized relationship between humanitarian aid and refugee flow; namely, that the presence of humanitarian aid in a conflict would at the very least have no impact on refugee flow. Since this coefficient is not statistically significant, however, it is safe to assume that humanitarian aid has little to no impact on the flow of refugees during a conflict.

Another way to interpret these results is at the constituent variable-level. Of the five constituent variables for humanitarian aid, only “aid” and “credit” had negative coefficients. Although none of the tested variables displayed any statistical significance, it is interesting to note that only some of the variables for humanitarian aid could be associated with decreased levels of refugee flow. While the negative coefficient for “aid” can be normatively explained, it is harder to understand why “credit” but not “loan,” “grant,” or “relief” had a negative association with refugee flow. I would blame it on lack of information. Regan’s data has a very small sample size for economic interventions,

confirming “credit” interventions in only three conflict-month cases out of 12,240. Similarly, “aid” only had four confirmed cases while “loan” had seven. “Grant” had the highest amount of confirmed interventions at 78. These coefficients can also be normatively explained, to some degree. Loans, grants, credit, and debt relief tend to have less material impact on a humanitarian crisis, especially in a war. Those economic reprieves even allow for greater military expenditure, even if they were delivered with humanitarian intent. Aid in the form of non-military equipment, however, is more enabling in the sense of supporting and/or preventing refugees. This theme of variables and their enabling effects will present itself in the cases of direct and indirect military support as well. Regardless, these results still satisfy *Hypothesis 2*, that humanitarian aid would have little to no impact on refugee flow. As discussed previously, humanitarian aid can increase incentives for violence in some cases (Wood & Sullivan, 2015). Aid delivered to government agencies presents a challenge to rebel groups, who have a harder time generating civilian support and maintaining authority when they lack total control of resources. This phenomenon mitigates any net decreases in refugee flow caused by aid.

Indirect Military Support

The second category that was tested was indirect military support, which was comprised of the variables “equip” and “intel.” The summary statistics for this regression test can be found under “Model 4” in *Table 2* below. Indirect military support had a coefficient estimate of 8.947e+04 and a standard error of 6.546e+04. There is some slight statistical significance when compared to humanitarian aid, as “indirect” had a t-value of 1.367 and a p-value of 0.1718. These values still fall short of the acceptable range. The correlation value between “indirect” and “refugee flow” is 0.00428, which is within the

range denoting a weak relationship. There is some statistical significance at the constituent variable level, however. “Equip” has a t-value of 2.473 and a p-value of 0.0134. This puts it in the acceptable range of statistical significance, suggesting that there is linear relationship between “equip” and “refugee flow.” “Intel” tested well-short of the acceptable range for significance, and its negative coefficient estimate goes against the expected outcome outlined in the hypothesis.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Models for Indirect Military Support and Its Constituent Variables

	Model 3				Model 4			
Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
(Intercept)	2.404e+05	1.461e+04	16.454	< 2e-16 ***	2.409e+05	1.461e+04	16.490	< 2e-16 ***
Indirect	-	-	-	-	8.947e+04	6.546e+04	1.367	0.1718
Equip	2.119e+05	8.569e+04	2.473	0.0134 *	-	-	-	-
Intel	-7.787e+04	9.999e+04	-0.779	0.4362	-	-	-	-
Sizeopp	7.137e-01	3.317e-01	2.152	0.0314 *	7.041e-01	3.317e-01	2.123	0.0338 *
Fatal	4.647e-01	3.892e-02	11.941	< 2e-16 ***	4.639e-01	3.893e-02	11.918	< 2e-16 ***
Coldwar	-8.690e+04	1.733e+04	-5.015	5.42e-07 ***	-8.743e+04	1.733e+04	-5.045	4.65e-07 ***

*Significant codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1*

is not statistically significant to a satisfying degree, however, this conclusion is too hasty.

These results can also be interpreted at the constituent variable-level. “Equip” not only had a high and positive coefficient estimate, but it exhibited statistical significance as indicated by its t-value and p-value. These results suggest that the presence of military equipment or aid is correlated with higher levels of refugees. Like “aid” in the humanitarian aid category, this is likely due to the enabling effects of equipment. Rather than enabling the prevention or mitigation of refugee flow, however, military equipment and aid enables more violence against civilians. Rebel organizations without a steady supply of arms and equipment pose less of a threat to both the government and the civilian population. Without weapons, rebels intrinsically less likely to commit acts of violence against civilians. The supplying of small arms and other small-scale equipment lends a rebel organization few options in terms of combating government forces. They are often only left with the option of using guerilla tactics and using the civilian population to blend in. This leads to more paranoia amongst government forces, who will often target civilians in order to flush out any rebels hiding amongst them (Kalyvas, 2006). This could also explain why “intel” did not display any statistical significance. In fact, the variable for intelligence interventions had a negative coefficient estimate. Intelligence is far less enabling in terms of violence against civilians. Intelligence delivered from a third party during a civil war is only useful for actions against combatants. It is improbable that intelligence on combatant forces would lead to civilian victimization and violence. Overall, the values associated with indirect military support as a whole do not satisfy *Hypothesis 1*, but the constituent variable “equip” does.

Direct Military Support

The last category that was tested was direct military support, which was comprised of the variables “troops,” “navy,” and “airforce.” The summary statistics for this category can be found in “Model 6” of *Table 3*. “Military,” the broader variable indicating the presence of direct military support, had a coefficient estimate of 7.172e+05 and a standard error of 1.461e+04. Its t-value of 0.663 and p-value of 0.5071 indicate little to no statistical significance, and “military” fails to satisfy the conditions of *Hypothesis 1* as a broader category of variables. There is some statistical significance at the constituent variable level, though. The coefficient estimate for “troops” is rather high at 9.092e+04, and its t-value of 2.271 and p-value of 0.0232 indicate statistical significance. This means that interventions or support in the form of troops is correlated with a higher level of refugees during a civil war. The same cannot be said for the constituent variables “navy” and “airforce.” Both coefficient estimates were negative, implying the opposite outcome predicted in *Hypothesis 1* in terms of direct military support’s effect on refugee flow. Additionally, their t-values and p-values do not indicate statistical significance, suggesting that effects of air and naval interventions on refugee flow in a civil war are irrelevant.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Models for Direct Military Support and Its Constituent Variables

	Model 5				Model 6			
Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Estimate	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
(Intercept)	2.406e+05	1.461e+04	16.466	< 2e-16 ***	2.414e+05	1.461e+04	16.528	< 2e-16 ***
Military(Direct)	-	-	-	-	7.172e+03	1.081e+04	0.663	0.5071
Troops	9.092e+04	4.004e+04	2.271	0.0232 *	-	-	-	-
Navy	-2.191e+05	2.334e+05	-0.939	0.3480	-	-	-	-
Airforce	-2.992e+04	6.711e+04	-0.446	0.6557	-	-	-	-
Sizeopp	5.868e-01	3.405e-01	1.723	0.0849	6.651e-01	3.355e-01	1.983	0.0474 *

There are several ways to interpret these results. From a broader categorical perspective, direct military support did not satisfy the conditions described in *Hypothesis 1*. This does not mean it is completely irrelevant in the context of refugee flow. “Model 5” shows how each of the constituent variables relates to refugee flow. As previously mentioned, the “troops” variable satisfies the conditions of *Hypothesis 1* while “navy” and “airforce” did not. Empirically, this makes sense. The intervention and presence of troops in a civil war is much more conducive to civilian victimization than strategic air and naval strikes. Troops are harder to control than strategic strikes, and this inherently means that incidents of violence perpetrated against civilians are more likely when troops are deployed in a conflict. There is also the visible factor to consider: troops on the ground present a visible threat to non-combatants. Unlike air and naval strikes, troops can be seen, heard, and most importantly, avoided. Civilians fearing persecution and violence have the opportunity to flee from troops in a conflict zone since troops present a clear and avoidable danger (Kalyvas, 2006). This option does not exist for air and naval strikes, which can occur anywhere at any time and are generally less of a direct threat that civilians can avoid.

This idea of visible danger and violence is similar to the idea of “enabling” as discussed in indirect military support and humanitarian aid. Just like non-military equipment can enable the prevention of refugees and military equipment can enable violence against civilians (thus creating refugees), troops on the ground is more enabling and conducive to civilian victimization and fear. This fear, whether warranted or not, leads people to flee their communities and become refugees. What all three variables have in common is their physical presence in a conflict and their visibility to the civilian population. Noncombatants can see troops. They can see weapons and equipment in the hands of troops. They can see medical equipment and aid in the hands of humanitarian workers. Perceptions seem to matter in the context of violence and fear, and these perceptions can influence individuals to become refugees or not.

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to determine the relationship between external support within the context of a civil war and its effects on refugee flow. External support was defined and categorized three ways: humanitarian aid, indirect military support, and direct military support. These categories of support were comprised of multiple variables and tested using multiple regression models to determine their relationship to country-year measurements of refugees. Overall, the categorical tests for direct and indirect military support did not satisfy the conditions of *Hypothesis 1*, wherein both forms of support would correlate with a higher level of refugee flow. Humanitarian aid, however, did satisfy the conditions of *Hypothesis 2*, wherein humanitarian aid would have little to no relationship with refugee flow and at the very least would show a slight decrease.

The constituent variable tests were far more telling than the categorical observations. Humanitarian aid displayed little to no relationship with refugee flow across all of its variables, confirming *Hypothesis 2* at the constituent variable level, as well. For indirect military support, the variable for military equipment and aid showed a positive relationship with refugee flow, indicating that the presence of military equipment and aid can lead to more refugees. This was also true for the variable indicating troop presence in the direct military support test. The presence of troops in a civil war is correlated with higher levels of refugees, while air and naval strikes are not. All of these observations emphasize the idea of noncombatant perceptions influencing refugee flow. Troops, aid, and equipment are all tangible things that can influence the fear levels of a civilian population. Troops and equipment can lead to increased fear and violence, while aid can influence civilians to remain in the country. Air and naval strikes, intelligence, and economic loans/credit/grants/relief are far too intangible to have any impacts on the fear perceptions of civilians.

This poses an interesting predicament for countries proximate to a civil war or with international interests at stake. The Syrian Refugee Crisis in the mid 2010's led many countries to reevaluate their intervention strategies in wars outside of their own country. If the price of intervention was increased refugees in the international world, was intervention worth it? What strategies afforded countries a way to intervene in a conflict without the risk of increased refugees? According to these tests measuring the relationship between various intervention strategies and refugee flow, policy makers may want to pursue less perceptible means of direct and indirect military support, such as naval/air strikes and intelligence lending. Additionally, they may be more effective in

limiting refugee flow in choosing to deliver non-military aid and equipment rather than economic grants/loans/relief.

This research presents an interesting question regarding the influence of civilian perceptions on refugee flow. Do certain acts of violence create more refugees than others? Additionally, there are also questions regarding the effectiveness of humanitarian equipment and aid. Do certain strategies of aid distribution limit refugee flow more than others? What is the most effective way of distributing humanitarian aid and equipment? These are all questions future researchers may choose to focus on going forward.

References

- Apodaca, C. (1998). Human Rights Abuses: Precursor to Refugee Flight? *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 11: 80–93.
- Arreguin-Toft, I. (2001). How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict. *International Security*, 26(1), 93-128.

- Bacevich, A.; Cohen, E. (2001). *War Over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age*.
Columbia University Press.
- Balcells, L., & Kalyvas, S. (2014). Does Warfare Matter? Severity, Duration, and
Outcomes of Civil Wars. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 58(8), 1390-1418.
- Cooper, H.; Schmitt, E. (2014). "U.S. Airstrikes by U.S. and Allies Hit ISIS Targets in
Syria." *The New York Times*.
- Davenport, C., Moore, W., & Poe, S. (2003) Sometimes You Just Have to Leave:
Domestic Threats and Forced Migration, 1964-1989. *International
Interactions*, 29(1), 27-55.
- Downes, A. (2006). Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian
Victimization in War. *International Security*, 30(4), 152-195.
- Dreher, A., Fuchs, A., Langlotz, S. (2018). The Effects of Foreign Aid on Refugee Flows.
GLO Discussion Paper, No. 195, Global Labor Organization, Maastricht.
- Kalyvas, S. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge Studies in
Comparative Politics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kelly, F.J. (1973). *History of Special Forces in Vietnam, 1961-1971*. Washington, D.C.:
United States Army Center of Military History.
- Kunz, E.F. (1973). The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement.
The International Migration Review, 7(2), 125-146.
- Pentagon Papers, The. (1971). "Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam, 1954-1960."
Volume 1, Chapter 5, Section 3, pp. 314-346. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Regan, P.M. (2002). Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts.
The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 46(1), 55-73.

- Salehyan, I., & Gleditsch, K. (2006). Refugees and the Spread of Civil War. *International Organization*, 60(2), 335-366.
- Salehyan, I., Gleditsch, K., & Cunningham, D. (2011). Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups. *International Organization*, 65(4), 709-744.
- Stack, L. (2011). "In Slap at Syria, Turkey Shelters Anti-Assad Fighters." *The New York Times*
- Taheri, A. (2013). Has the Time Come for Military Intervention in Syria? *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 35(4), 217-220.
- Thompson, L. (2010). *Refugee Workers in the Indochina Exodus, 1975-1982*. NC: MacFarland Publishing Company.
- Tran, M. (2015). "Beyond the Military Jargon: Who Will Monitor Airstrikes in Syria?" *The Guardian*.
- UN General Assembly. (1945). *Action with respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. United Nations Charter, Chapter VII, Article 51.
- UN General Assembly. (1951). *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p 137.
- UNHCR. (2018). "Syria Regional Refugee Response—Overview." *UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response*.
- Valentino, B., Huth, P., & Balch-Lindsay, D. (2004). "Draining the Sea": Mass Killing and Guerilla Warfare. *International Organization*, 58(2), 375-407.
- Weiner, M. (1996). Bad Neighbors, Bad Neighborhoods: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows. *International Security*, 21(1), 5-42.

Wood, R.; Kathman, J.; Gent, S. (2012). Armed Intervention and Civilian Victimization in Intrastate Conflicts. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(5), 647, 660.

Wood, R.; Sullivan, C. (2015). Doing Harm by Doing Good? The Negative Externalities of Humanitarian Aid Provision during Civil Conflict. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(3), 736-748.